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**NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, and Anthony Crawford, Postal Inspector in Charge, United States Postal Inspection Service, Mid-Atlantic Division, announced that John W. Pierce, Jr., age 37, of Shacklefords, Virginia, was sentenced yesterday to 36 months of incarceration by United States District Judge Robert E. Payne on five counts of theft of U.S. mail. Pierce pled guilty to these charges on November 21, 2002.

In March of 1988, Pierce was awarded a contract by the United States Postal Service to sort and deliver mail in the West Point, Virginia, area. His designated route included, but was not limited to, Church View, King and Queen Court House, Mattaponi, Shacklefords, Little Plymouth, Cologne, Plainview, and West Point. Pierce continued in this employment until July, 2002.

On July 25, 2002, the Postal Inspection Service obtained and executed a federal search warrant at Pierce's home. During their search, postal inspectors discovered three parked vehicles and several pits in the rear of Pierce's home and the surrounding wooded area containing undelivered U.S. mail. In addition, the inspectors removed the apron which surrounded Pierce's mobile home, and discovered additional loose mail, parcels, bundles and sacks of undelivered mail. The search resulted in the seizure of three 9-ton postal vehicles full of various classes of undelivered U.S. mail, none of which was addressed to Pierce.

On September 9, 2002, Pierce gave consent for the search of a self-storage container he had previously rented. A search of the container revealed five U.S. mail tubs with undelivered mail and two small sacks of undelivered mail.

Pierce admitted that the mail recovered from his property should have been delivered on his route. He stated that in the past few years his route had become unmanageable and, instead of delivering the mail, he began to bring it home and leave it in the backyard and surrounding area. Pierce admitted to bringing First-Class mail home, rifling it, and taking money, mostly from greeting cards, amounting to a total loss of \$500.

Mr. McNulty stated: "To paraphrase a familiar saying, Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night will keep this office and U.S. Postal Inspectors from catching and punishing anyone who steals the mail."

The case was investigated by the United States Postal Inspection Service and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Peter S. Duffey.